

California's

CITIZEN CORPS COUNCILS

and VOADS:

**A Model for Cooperative and
Collaborative Relations**

**A Guidance Document From
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CITIZEN CORPS COUNCILS and VOADS: A Model for Cooperative and Collaborative Relations

Executive Summary

The purpose of this paper is to define relationships between Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOADs) and Citizen Corps Councils (CCCs). The established relationship will allow VOAD and the Citizen Corps Program (CCP)¹ and their component parts at all levels to work cooperatively, noncompetitively, and productively during pre and post disaster activities. This paper was developed in the context of questions raised specifically by the Northern and Southern California VOADs.

There are marked differences in the composition of VOADs and CCCs. These differences are reflected in the main activities of their component parts and the phases of disaster when the particular components would be most active. When it is clear that the two organizations and their component parts are not trying to do the same work and competing for the same resources there is a basis for cooperative, noncompetitive, and productive relations between them.

This paper also looks at the issue of spontaneous, convergent volunteers following a disaster. The convergent volunteer situation is similar to that of unsolicited in-kind donations. Citing the example of recent improvements in the handling of in-kind donations, we make a number of recommendations for mitigating the convergent volunteer problem.

Recommendations to local community groups are offered to try to assist with the many organizational choices available to organizers of emergency volunteer capabilities at a local level.

The findings of this paper are based on numerous interviews, a discussion between stake holders in Los Angeles on November 14th, 2003, and extensive review of the literature and web site information. The southern California wildfires of October – November, 2003 were at their height throughout this period and our discussions were inevitably impacted by that disaster.

While this paper was developed in the context of issues raised in California we believe that the analysis presented here also will be applicable in other states.

¹ The term Citizen Corps *Program* is used to refer to the entire programmatic framework of Citizen Corps including Citizen Corps Councils at all levels and their component parts.

CITIZEN CORPS COUNCILS and VOADS: A Model for Cooperative and Collaborative Relations

I. Background:

New and higher levels of coordination of emergency agencies have generally arisen out of a perceived historical failure of the agencies to work together effectively to meet the challenges of a major disaster.

- ***National VOAD (NVOAD)*** was created in the aftermath of Hurricane Camille (1969) in response to a serious lack of coordination among the major national relief agencies. There were gaps in service, wasteful duplication of efforts, and unseemly competition for donations. Afterwards the agencies agreed that this was a man-made disaster within the natural disaster, and that they needed a framework to structure their relationships. As a result, they came together to found NVOAD.
- ***Collaborating Agencies Responding to Disaster (CARD) and Community Agencies Disaster Relief Effort (CADRE)***, coordinating bodies in the San Francisco Bay Area, were developed after the Loma Prieta earthquake (1989) as a result of the national relief organizations' and government's failure to provide services to especially vulnerable populations, including people with disabilities and people who are homeless. Local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that were outside of the NVOAD structure formed county-level coalitions to become knowledgeable and trained in disaster services in order to assist their clientele in future events.
- ***California's Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS)*** developed out of the Oakland Hills fire (1991). First responder agencies could not cooperate effectively to rescue victims and fight the fire because of incompatible equipment and a lack of common command and control systems. SEMS mandates specific organizational structures, the use of the Incident Command System, and standardized equipment and training for all first responder agencies in California that wish to be reimbursed for the costs of responding to major disasters.
- ***Emergency Network Los Angeles (ENLA)***, a coalition of local NGOs and NVOAD affiliates, was created by the Los Angeles Mayor's office following the Northridge Earthquake (1994). The timely creation of ENLA in the first days following the disaster avoided the problems of competition and lack of coordination among the local and national organizations that characterized the Loma Prieta earthquake. In this, ENLA demonstrated that a new level of planning does not need to arise out of dysfunctional inter-organizational relationships.

ENLA effectively operated as the local VOAD for a year, after which it formally merged with the local LA VOAD (and another, smaller coalition, the Los Angeles Access Network). It took several years before NVOAD would endorse the inclusion of local NGOs into a local VOAD but it did, in 1998, and it is now NVOAD policy to encourage inclusive local coalitions.

- ***Citizen Corps*** is a new management and coordinating program on the emergency planning and management scene, created from the top down by the federal government following the shock of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The CCP was largely developed in a political process, not in the field as a response to perceived problems that required a greater level of coordination. The CCP does not have universal support. Some emergency managers and first responders question the permanence of the CCP (like Project Impact, another top-down, politically defined model that started with great fanfare and disappeared with change of administrations). Nonetheless, citizen interest in homeland security has driven the development of the program.

The mission of CCP was not clearly defined at its inception and federal funding for it has been modest. A specific model for local Citizen Corps Councils, the basic structure of the CCP, was not spelled out in the federal founding documents. Nor is there a model for relationships between local CCCs, local VOADs, local government emergency planning and management agencies, and other relevant bodies such as the Business and Industry Council on Emergency Planning and Preparedness (BICEPP). Further, there is not a determination which, if any, of the various emergency planning and coordinating bodies is in charge of the others.

To an extent, CCCs could be seen as overlapping the role of other organizations. However, it also has new and important functions which deserve support. Many local councils are appearing around California, both at the county and neighborhood levels, with funding and support behind them from the State. Also, many government and volunteer groups have expressed the value of having a recognized organizational structure to gather volunteers and groups together.

Each new structure creates tension at the interface with older structures as existing entities struggle to defend their mission and ability to obtain enough resources to survive. These are often disparagingly referred to as "turf battles," but where the existing agency is a vital organization with an important mission these battles are not trivial or unimportant.

The challenge is to maximize the strengths of the CCCs in a way that does not diminish the roles of other coalitions with which it interfaces. This is especially evident with regard to the VOADs, with which CCCs are most similar to and therefore where the most likelihood for conflict exists if roles are not clearly understood.

II. What are CCCs and VOADs? How are they similar and how do they differ?

Neither VOAD nor CCC are operational organizations.^{2,3} CCCs and VOADs can be most clearly distinguished from each other by the entities that comprise them and the phases of disaster when these component entities would activate. Both CCCs and VOADs are management/coordinating bodies. They are not operational themselves; however, their component entities often are. Therefore it is not helpful to ask what a CCC or a VOAD would do in a disaster.

II. A. The Structure, Role, and Mission of Citizen Corps Councils

The role and purpose of CCCs are suggested in the second paragraph of *Citizen Corps – A Guide for Local Officials*:

“The goal is to have all citizens participate in making their communities safer, stronger, and better prepared for preventing and handling threats of terrorism, crime, and disasters of all kinds.”⁴

Elsewhere in that document and other documents, including the Statement of Affiliation between the CCP and NVOAD (and the related press release), there is greater emphasis on CC as a disaster preparedness and coordinating body. However, that emphasis weakens rather than strengthens the CCP. If it is primarily a disaster organization it is hemmed in on one side by government emergency management agencies that by law cannot transfer their responsibility for public safety to another entity, even a FEMA-created one like CCC. On the other side it is hemmed in by the long-established VOAD structure which has operated effectively in disaster relief and recovery for over thirty years.

However, if a local CCC is defined primarily as a community safety and security coordinating body serving as an umbrella for its four charter federal component parts, Neighborhood Watch, CERT, VIPS, and Medical Reserve Corps, it has a consistent and unique mission. Reaching out to local residents to encourage volunteerism, and then directing volunteers to one of its component programs or to a VOAD agency or other local organization, is a logical extension of that mission. Public outreach to foster volunteerism could be handled by a local Volunteer Center (VC) working as a component of the CCC where there is an active VC.

The Citizen Corps is a multi-tier program. At the **federal** level, the CCP is located within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Effective, December 2003, the CCP was moved to the DHS Office for Domestic Preparedness.

² “NVOAD is not itself a service delivery organization. Instead, it upholds the privilege of its members to independently provide relief and recovery services, while expecting them to do so cooperatively.” See: www.nvoad.org.

³ However, the line between a coordinating structure and an operational organization is not always clear. This has been a recurrent issue within NVOAD since its inception.

⁴ *Citizen Corps: A Guide for Local Officials*, page 6.

Each **state** has an identified CCP Point of Contact (POC); in California, the Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism (GO SERV) is the CCP POC. In Fiscal Year 2004, GO SERV will continue managing the CCP statewide program, working closely with California's Office of Homeland Security (OHS) and Office of Emergency Services (OES). However, California's Office of Homeland Security will take over administration of grants for CCP. Additionally, the federal DHS requires every state to have a State Citizen Corps Council. In California, GO SERV manages this multi-stakeholder group where issues pertaining to emergency volunteers and Citizen Corps programs are addressed for statewide consistency.

GO SERV recommends that every **county Operational Area (OA)** in California have a county-level CCC to provide a coordinating level consistent within SEMS that oversees city and neighborhood Citizen Corps Council development. In California many, but not all, counties do have Councils at this time. Below the county level, individual **cities and even neighborhoods** are encouraged to start local CCCs.

At this point in their development, it is difficult to generalize about county-level CCC structures in California. For example:

- Los Angeles County OA is in the process of developing a very structured, hierarchical CCC model starting at the level of the OA Advisory Committee. In the future, the County OA hopes to encourage the eight disaster management areas to develop regional CCCs. These regional CCCs could then send representatives to the OA CCC.
- The City of Fresno has an active CCC but the Fresno County OA does not.
- In most counties, the OA is responsible for coordinating the county level Citizen Corps Council. In some counties, the Red Cross serves as the coordinating entity.

What can be said is that different OAs will relate to the CCC potential based on local needs, conditions, interests, and resources.

The four charter federal programs of the CCP, as defined by DHS are: Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Neighborhood Watch Program (NWP), Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS), and the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC).

These four programs are closely tied to government first response agencies.⁵ This distinguishes them from VOAD members, which are related to the non-governmental sector through their volunteer Boards of Directors. CCC members' activities during a specific disaster likewise would be correspondingly different. *Since the disaster mission of the four charter federal CC programs flows out of their relationship with first responder organizations it is not surprising that their primary work in a specific disaster comes in the response phase, during and immediately after the event.*

- **NWP** has a well-established day-to-day community safety and anti-crime role. In the current situation it is hoped that NWP might also serve as an anti-terrorism tool by noting and reporting suspicious activities in a neighborhood. While it has

⁵ Members of the MRC might assist non-governmental medical facilities in an emergency, but the non-governmental facilities will take direction from the government health agency in a mass casualty event.

- not been defined as a disaster service organization, NWP can do effective disaster community preparedness and response work, for example by transmitting preparedness and non-structural mitigation information to residents and developing lists of elderly and/or disabled neighbors who might need special assistance following a disaster. NWP might also plan to provide immediate assistance to these neighbors following a disaster.
- **VIPS** members volunteer to provide administrative and field services to law enforcement agencies. Like NWP, this is an on-going activity, not specifically defined as disaster related. VIPS members can be found in most police and sheriff departments across California. In the field, they are often found in patrol cars participating in civilian community policing. Following a disaster, VIPS volunteers have helped with search and rescue, volunteer coordination, security, traffic management, damage assessment, and other tasks such as staffing hotlines and serving meals.
 - **CERT** members are trained in first aid, triage, suppression of small fires, and light urban search and rescue. CERT teams can help their families, neighbors, and co-workers following a disaster. This in itself is of assistance to first responders who have to prioritize the many demands on their resources in an emergency. CERT teams and members can also assist police, fire/rescue, and emergency medical personnel in the hours immediately following a disaster. CERT teams can also perform the same disaster preparedness activities cited above for NWP. GO SERV is currently exploring various strategies to expand the scope and mission of CERT teams in California to better engage them in all phases of emergency management. GO SERV also hopes to better integrate CERT teams into every community's emergency plans.
 - **MRC** is made up of retired and active medical professionals and others with an interest and training in the medical field. Members work with government and private hospitals and health agencies to provide services following an event that produces mass casualties in their areas. This program area is growing quickly in California with 12 programs statewide now receiving "demonstration grants" directly from the federal Health and Human Services Agency, Office of the Surgeon General. Other non-granted programs are also forming in other communities.

Membership in CCC is not limited to its core components. Other organizations that might appropriately be members of a CCC include:

- Volunteer Centers. Although these are represented in NVOAD through Points of Light Foundation their expertise in recruiting, training, and managing volunteers make them a natural partner of a CCC.
- American Red Cross. ARC is already involved in many CCCs in California. Because of its Congressional mandate⁶ ARC should have a seat in every body that coordinates relief and recovery activities. GO SERV plans to require county OA level CCCs to include both the American Red Cross and Volunteer Centers among their members.

⁶ In 1905, Congress mandated that ARC provide relief services to disaster victims. It is the only organization with such a mandate. The mandate does not include government funding for ARC services.

- News broadcasters' associations. As a key link in disseminating information to the public these organizations can be valuable members of a CCC. See more under "Convergent Volunteers," below.
- Business associations. including Business and Industry Council on Planning and Preparedness (BICEPP) and service clubs. These can link the CCC to this key sector of the community.
- Central labor councils. are important organizations in some communities and a potential source of volunteers with needed craft skills following a disaster.
- Individuals. who can serve as links between the CCC and the community at large. They can ensure that the CCC is informed about neighborhood and community concerns and then, in turn, the community is informed about CCC plans and activities.

This is not intended to serve as an exhaustive list of potential CCC members. The definition of CCC is so broad that virtually any organization that has a civic mission can appropriately be included under its umbrella, as can individuals.

Because of their key and multi-faceted roles, the ARC and VC should be members of both the CCC and VOAD where both exist. In addition, in communities where there is both a local CCC and a local VOAD, effective liaison between the two should be maintained. Both the VOAD and CCC should be included in the OA multi-hazard plan and have a defined role in a coordinating structure such as OA Advisory Committee. Other than the Red Cross and Volunteer Centers, none of the organizations listed above are eligible to be full, voting members of a VOAD. By taking them in under its umbrella, a CCC greater expands the disaster resources available to a community.

The looseness in definition of what a CCC should be, and what entities should be included, has led to some confusion that need resolution. Resolution will facilitate clear choices at the local level about how best to organize and manage volunteer resources.

- Some single organizations (such as a Boy Scout troop) were incorrectly recognized as CCCs. Since a CCC is a *Council*, intended to coordinate the activities of multiple member components, it is not logical for a single entity to be a CCC. Where this has happened that organization should be redirected to become an entity that is properly operational, such as a CERT team, and to join a broader local CCC.
- Some perceived that organizations have applied to be recognized as a local CCC primarily to have access to grant funding. This has been addressed by having local entities submit their application to be a CCC through the state and OA rather than applying directly through FEMA.

II. B. The Structure, Role, and Mission of VOAD

The mission of VOAD is to facilitate Cooperation, Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration among its members.⁷

VOAD is a three-tiered structure. National: NVOAD has a clearly defined membership policy. NVOAD is comprised of 38 dues-paying organizations that are:

- National in scope and purpose;
- Voluntary, that is, have voluntary membership or constituencies, and have a not-for-profit structure and tax-exempt status under Section 501[c][3] of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States;
- Active in Disaster, that is, have a documented disaster response program and a written policy for commitment of resources (personnel, funds, and equipment) to meet the needs of people, anywhere in the United States, affected by disaster, and do so without discrimination as to race, creed, gender, or age;

And which;

- State in writing their agreement with the purpose and principles of NVOAD as described in the by-laws;
- Encourage members to participate in NVOAD and VOAD activities;
- Make an annual contribution to the NVOAD budget at the level set by the organization;

Have representation at the annual NVOAD membership meeting.⁸

State VOADs are also clearly defined: "State VOAD structure and relationships should be analogous to NVOAD... and all nonprofit disaster related organizations in a State should be eligible for membership. Leadership should come from the voluntary sector not dominated by State or local government agencies." It should be noted that in California (and only in California) it is recognized that there are two state VOADs – Northern California VOAD and Southern California VOAD.

Local VOADs are a fairly recent phenomenon, developing in Florida after Hurricane Andrew (1992) and in California after the Loma Prieta Earthquake (1989). Their membership rules are also analogous to the national rules in that member organizations need to be 501[c][3] organizations (which meet the minimum test of "volunteer" by the legal requirement that they have a volunteer Board of Directors) with a defined disaster mission and a disaster operations plan. A local VOAD would include the local affiliates of the NVOAD organizations as well as local non-profit and faith-based organizations that have a defined disaster mission and a written disaster plan. These are the criteria for membership in ENLA.

Thus VOADs at all levels are made up of secular or faith-based non-profit organizations. All but one of the member organizations have day-to-day missions that are not tied to work in major disasters.⁹ These day-to-day missions of VOAD members, at all levels,

⁷ See www.nvoad.org

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ National Emergency Response Team does not seem to have a non-disaster mission. See www.nert-usa.org

involve the provision of health (including mental health) and human services, broadly defined.¹⁰

Since the disaster mission of VOAD members flows out of their day-to-day health and human service missions it is not surprising that (with the exception noted of ARRL) their primary work in a specific disaster comes after the event. They provide first aid, food, shelter, financial and material assistance, mental health counseling, assistance with rebuilding, and other crucial services to help individuals, families and communities cope with loss and get back on their feet.

In addition they conduct some disaster activities that are not tied to a specific event. They all provide training for their volunteer and paid staff. Many provide training, planning, and mitigation services to the community.

Finally, to avoid future confusion, it is necessary to consider another type of coordinating body, Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COADs), and evaluate their relevance in California. A key document on COADs was put out by the Missouri Disaster Recovery Partnership in July, 2002.¹¹

That paper defines the participants in a COAD as, "...any agency that has a role to play in any phase of emergency management. This includes disaster services agencies, emergency management agencies, and public, private or not-for-profit organizations with an interest in addressing a community's emergency management needs. The COAD will be a collaborative working group in which all the participants are equal partners united by common goals."

Since the two California State VOADs actively encourage the formation of local VOADs, and local CCCs can appropriately include all the entities "with an interest in addressing a community's emergency management needs" that do not fit the criteria for full membership in a local VOAD, and CCCs and local VOADs even overlap in many cases, such as ARC and VCs, in the California context it is difficult to see how local COADs, in addition to local VOADs and CCCs, could be anything other than duplicative and a source of additional confusion.

¹⁰ The exception is the Amateur Radio Relay League (ARRL). ARRL is also affiliated with the Citizen Corps.

¹¹ *Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) Guidance Manual*, The Missouri Disaster Recovery Partnership, July, 2002.

A Quick Comparison of CCC and VOAD

	CCC	VOAD
Structure	Multi-tier, indefinite number of levels starting with the federal government, state, county OA, city, community or neighborhood-based.	Multi-tier, up to 3 levels starting at NVOAD, to state VOADs and, increasingly, to local VOADs.
Membership	4 charter federal programs that are linked to first responder agencies and national affiliate organizations; otherwise very open-ended including government agencies, private non-profit organizations, groups, clubs, and individuals.	Full membership limited to 501[c][3] organizations with a defined disaster mission and plan.
Primary activities	NWP and VIPS day-to-day activities not primarily tied to disaster; they can have a valuable role in community preparedness. CERT and MRC most active immediately following a disaster. A CCC has no direct recovery mission but can be used as a coordination point for planning activities.	Members are most active in relief and long-term recovery activities, often lasting months or years after a disaster. ARRL exception: it is most active immediately following a disaster.
Secondary disaster-related activities	Training staff and volunteers; providing information to the community; gathering information and training on key skills; participating with neighborhoods and local first responders for preparedness, planning and general mitigation assistance;	Training staff, volunteers, and members of the community; providing preparedness information to the community, assisting with preparedness and non-structural mitigation.
Funding	Very modest DHS federal grants distributed through the State.	NVOAD funded by members' dues. State and local VOADs receive in-kind donations of time and services; sometimes government preparedness/mitigation grants for planning activities across the four phases of emergency response.

III. Forming Local Groups

With several choices among new and existing models of collaborative groups and programs - Citizen Corps Councils, local VOADs, CERT teams, etc., - residents in a local area can be confused as to which they should adopt to maximize their goals of safety, security, disaster preparedness, and effective disaster response and recovery.

The distinction between coordinating bodies and operational groups, discussed on page 4, is a useful starting point. An operational entity that is not allied with a coordinating body and, through it, to higher-level structures, is not going to be as strong as it might be. On the other hand, a coordinating body with no operational components will be very limited in what it can offer the community. Both are needed. While in actual experience an operational entity may precede the formation of a coordinating body, as NWP preceded CCCs, theoretically it is useful to begin with consideration of coordinating bodies.

III.A. Local Coordinating Bodies

At the county or regional level a local VOAD coordinates the disaster planning and disaster activities of nonprofit organizations that have a defined disaster mission and disaster plan. The primary reason for creating a local VOAD is to bring local organizations, those that have no affiliation with national relief organizations together with the local offices of the national relief organizations and with city and county first responder agencies.¹² Through these connections the local agencies can learn from disaster planning and recovery experts and their own disaster efforts can be made more effective.

Local organizations have learned through experience that they need to be able to provide relief and recovery services to their constituencies. These are often the most vulnerable and hardest-to-reach members of the community. The local organizations can be trained to be effective members of the disaster relief and recovery effort, to link their vulnerable constituencies to the larger community, and to have their work integrated with that of the national organizations and first responders.

A county that has a variety of local nonprofit organizations that serve vulnerable populations and that are not now linked to a disaster coordinating body might well benefit from forming a local VOAD. This would be done with the permission, assistance, and guidance of the state-level VOAD.

A county-level CCC can be much more open than a VOAD in terms of the types of entities that can be full, voting members. An additional strength is that CCCs are designed in a vertical structure that encourages building down from the county level into cities and neighborhoods.

¹² Representatives of government agencies participate in a VOAD in an ex officio, non-voting capacity to conform with VOAD membership rules.

A local VOAD can be a full member of a local (county, city, or neighborhood) CCC. However, while it will be very useful to have the county CCC represented at a VOAD in an ex officio capacity, the CCC cannot be a full, voting member of the VOAD.

Both kinds of collaborative structure will benefit through extensive information-sharing between them. This can be facilitated through overlapping membership such as the ARC, through formal liaison with each body represented at the other's regular meetings, or through both being included in a larger structure such as an OA Advisory Board.

There are many occasions when cooperative activity between them and with other coordinating structures will be desirable. For example, all the coordinating structures and their operational entities will benefit from being included in OA-level disaster plans and exercises. Also, when it is necessary to convene a post-disaster Long Term Recovery Committee some operational components of a local CCC may have resources to offer the effort. While there is no compulsion for the VOAD to include CCC representation in the Long Term Recovery Committee there may be good reason to in specific cases.

A strong framework for cooperation between CCCs and VOADs exists in the national Statement of Affiliation between the DHS and NVOAD. It calls for actions to:

- Raise public awareness about emergency preparedness, first aid and disaster response training, and disaster-related volunteer service activities of the NVOAD member organizations through the national, state and local Citizen Corps Councils;
- Promote the formation of local Citizen Corps Councils and Community VOADs and assist these groups with implementing the programs and practices associated with Citizen Corps and disaster-related volunteer service;
- Provide volunteer service opportunities that support first responders, disaster relief organizations, and community safety efforts;
- Encourage unaffiliated volunteers to join the member organizations of the NVOAD to effectively engage citizens as volunteers in all phases of emergency management;
- Publicly acknowledge the affiliation of Citizen Corps and NVOAD, which may include website links, co-logos on publications, and references in printed materials, including articles and news releases;
- Coordinate their respective activities to further their shared mission; and
- Keep each other informed of activities conducted in support of Citizen Corps and to provide an annual report summarizing those activities.

III. B. Local Operational Entities

When a community needs help it looks to the individual or organization that can do triage, spot a suspicious person in the neighborhood before a crime is committed, open a shelter, provide food, or put the roof back on a house. While coordinating bodies are critically important in increasing the effectiveness of operational entities, without actual operations there is little reason for them to exist.

Of the programs that were in place prior to the formation of the CC, the variety that exists in a community is determined by history, available resources, and sometimes by chance. A strong NWP can be created when one family moves onto a block who has experience with it elsewhere and for whom it is a priority. On the other hand, a strong NWP program can fall inactive if key people move away.

In the world of nonprofit health and human services, a person with leadership skills who responds to a need such as hunger or homelessness, together with funding support from a United Way or community foundation, can give rise to a rich network of organizations that are ready to serve their constituents in time of disaster. Some communities have such a network. Some others, with equally great need, do not.

The advantage of the CCC structure is that each level receives aid and leadership from a level above it. The state office can encourage a county OA to implement a CCC with at least the four charter federal programs. The county can provide leadership to sub-county structures. Within a local CCC, the easier to sustain programs can be used to recruit people into their first volunteer activity. The CCC can then funnel those who are willing to expend greater effort into more demanding programs. Thus, a NWP is a worthwhile activity in its own right and also a source of recruits for a CERT program. In Mendocino County, CERT then feeds into the Neighborhood Emergency Services Team (NEST) program.

Thus, rather than generalizing about what entities should be in a local VOAD or local CCC, the suggestion is to take careful inventory of the organizations, clubs, coordinating bodies, and other entities that exist in a community and determine which of them are possible to bring in under a coordinating umbrella. If there are multiple umbrellas, the nature of the entity will determine the best coordinating structure for it. Some overlapping membership is appropriate and to be expected. If there is only one, then every effort should be made to allow that one to serve as an umbrella for all the possible entities. The goal is to have every willing individual in a volunteer group, every operational volunteer group in a local coordinating body, and every coordinating body allied with a higher level coordinating body. Inclusiveness is far more important than a tidy structure.

IV. Convergent volunteers: Asset or Liability?

IV.A. Background

The people who spontaneously come forward to volunteer following a major disaster genuinely want to help disaster victims. But from the perspective of first responders and relief agencies their generosity looks quite different. From their perspective, convergent volunteers are often liabilities, not assets. They physically get in the way of people doing vital work, they divert resources away from serving victims to processing the volunteers, and they raise serious questions of liability, both if the volunteer is injured and if the volunteer does injury.

The current situation regarding convergent volunteers is similar to the situation with unsolicited in-kind donations a few years ago. After the Loma Prieta Earthquake (1989)

and Hurricane Andrew (1992), a primary topic of conversation at NVOAD meetings and wherever civilian disaster workers gathered was “the disaster within the disaster,” as massive in-kind donations of used clothing and out-of-date medications were often described. In recent years, there have been a number of steps taken that have moderated the problem of in-kind donations, although it will never completely go away. These steps include:

- Adventist Community Services, a member of NVOAD, expanded its role in handling and distributing in-kind donations to more effectively deal with the problem donations of used clothing, bedding, and other items from well-meaning individuals. ACS experience with setting up warehouse facilities and receiving, sorting, and distributing goods has done much to alleviate the problem.
- Many organizations are explicitly stating that the best donation is cash and/or that they will not accept any unsolicited in-kind donations or accept only certain specified types of goods.
- Many people in the media have been educated to the problem and no longer broadcast appeals for in-kind donations. This was notable during the recent southern California fires.

IV.B. Recommendations

A similar process needs to take place with regard to convergent volunteers, recognizing that here, also, the problem can be moderated but it will not completely disappear. Steps that should be taken include:

- In each jurisdiction that has primary responsibility for handling major disasters (OAs, in California) a comprehensive plan for dealing with convergent volunteers needs to be developed and implemented. One agency with primary responsibility for carrying out that plan should be designated. The possibilities include: (1) Volunteer Centers handle intake in person, and assign volunteers to agencies that have previously indicated an interest in receiving them. Many VCs are able to do this now on a day-to-day basis; however, many lack the capacity to effectively deal with several thousand volunteers over the course of a few days or for any prolonged period of time. (2) Comprehensive information & referral agencies do an initial assessment and assignment to a willing agency over the phone, with the in-person intake done by the agency utilizing the volunteer. I&Rs have on-going contact with agencies and expertise in developing databases. (3) Any other agency that is willing to take on this task and develop the expertise do so.
- The CCC and VOAD should conduct major campaigns to educate the public about the need for affiliated volunteers and the satisfactions to be gained through that work, on the one hand, and the problems of convergent volunteers, on the other. The CCC can use its ties with news broadcasters, service clubs, and unions to get this message out to the public.

Concluding Remarks

Many new organizations were formed and others were re-designed after 9/11. This created a situation in which it is easy to loose track of the main reasons for bringing volunteers and voluntary organizations together under a coordinating umbrella to assist in emergency planning and response. The benefits that were anticipated from the introduction of the new structures can get lost as new and the old organizations work to figure out how they fit together in ways that benefit all entities, and, more importantly, the community. The ability for the old and the new to work together rests on their ability to define distinctions between them that focuses each organization on it's strengths and highlights areas of mutual connection and support that benefit both.

We have many choices in California. CCCs and VOADs have complementary, not competitive, goals. If we plan and define them correctly they will be supportive and symbiotic, and our communities will be better prepared, more resilient, and stronger for the range and diversity of options. If we fail to do that, much of the good work that is invested in all the structures can be lost in unnecessary competition. The goal of this paper is to move forward the process of cooperation and collaboration between them.

Appendices

A.I. Resources Utilized in Development of this Paper

a. The following people were interviewed in preparation of this paper and/or participated in the November 14, 2003 meeting:

Name	Organization(s)	Email	Phone
Jim Brown	GO SERV	jbrown@goserv.ca.gov	(916) 322-1536
Phyllis Cauley	California OES	phyllis.cauley@oes.ca.gov	(916) 845-8793
Greg Chun	GO SERV	Greg.Chun@goserv.ca.gov	(916) 324-7947
Dick Eskes	NCVOAD CWS	reskes@silcon.com	(925) 939-1250
Carla Glazebrook	Fresno CCC	CitizenCorps@Fresno.gov	(559) 621-2328
Karma Hackney	California OES	karma_hackney@oes.ca.gov	(916) 845-8141
Kimberly Hall	SCVOAD	SGSCH@aol.com	(818) 347-3574
Kevin Leisher	American Red Cross	leisherk@arcla.org	(213) 739-6820
Bill McCloud	LACO CERT	wmccloud@lacoofd.org	(323) 881-3077
Larry Mitcham	California OES	larry.mitcham@oes.ca.gov	
Rick Paige	Mendocino CO ESA CERT VOAD Citizen Corps Council	mesaofc@co.mendocino.ca.us	(707) 463-5630
Ellen Reay	Volunteer Centers	Ereay.volctr.ca@prodigy.net	(916) 324-4521
Eve Rubell	HHCLA ENLA	erubell@hhcla.org	(213) 744-0724
Jacqueline Russell	Emergency Network Los Angeles	jruess63831@aol.com	(323) 291.8822 (310) 863-0538
Sandra Shields	LACO OEM	sshields@lacoec.org	(323) 980-2254
Adam Sutkus	GO SERV	asutkus@goserv.ca.gov	(916) 324-3056

Moderator: Burt Wallrich, President, Emergency Network Builders LLC
Email: bwallrich@emnetwork.us Voice: 800.318.7618

b. The following Citizen Corps Councils responded to requests for information:

Benicia (CA) CCC
Campbell (CA) CCC
Fresno (CA) CCC
San Juan Capistrano (CA) Troop 724 Boy Scouts CCC
Union City (CA) CCC

c. Websites researched:

www.adventist.communityservices.org
www.citizencorps.gov
www.dhs.gov
www.enla.org
www.fema.org
www.fresnocitizenscorps.org
www.goserv.ca.gov
www.medicalreservecorps.gov
www.co.mendocino.ca.us/mesa
www.nert-usa.org
www.nvoad.org
www.oes.ca.gov
www.policevolunteers.org
www.preparenow.org

A.II. Relevant documents

2-1-1: A New Essential Link For Disaster Information, Paper presented to the Third Annual Disaster Resistant California Conference, April, 2003. Download from www.emnetwork.us.

Calling 2-1-1 for I&R, IAEM Bulletin, October, 2003. Download from www.emnetwork.us.

Citizen Corps: A Guide for Local Officials, Citizen Corps, April 2002. Download from www.citizencorps.usa.

Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) Guidance Manual, The Missouri Disaster Recovery Partnership, July, 2002. Download from www.sema.state.mo.us.

Disaster Service Worker Volunteer Program (DSWVP) Guidance, OES, April, 2001. Download from www.oes.ca.gov.

The Evolving Role of Community-Based Organizations in Disaster Recovery, Paper presented to The First Internet Disaster Prevention and Limitation Conference, Summer, 1996 and abstracted in *Natural Hazard Observer*, November, 1996. Download from www.emnetwork.us.

Long Term Recovery Committee Manual, NVOAD, July 1999. Download from www.nvoad.org.

Medical Reserve Corps: A Guide for Local Leaders, Citizen Corps, undated. Download from www.medicalreservecorps.gov.

Statement of Affiliation Between the Department of Homeland Security and National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, May 2003. Download from www.nvoad.org.

They Will Come: Post-Disaster Volunteers and Local Governments, OES, November, 2001. Download from www.oes.ca.gov.

A.III. Acronyms

ARC: American Red Cross
BICEPP: Business and Industry Council on Emergency Planning and Preparedness
CADRE: Community Agencies Disaster Relief Effort
CARD: Collaborating Agencies Responding to Disaster
CC: Citizens Corps; CCC: Citizens Corps Council(s)
CCP: Citizen Corps Program
CERT: Community Emergency Response Team(s)
CWS: Church World Service
DHS: Department of Homeland Security
DOC: Departmental Operations Center
FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Agency
GO SERV: California Governor's Office on Service and Voluntarism
MRC: Medical Reserve Corps
NGO: Non-governmental Organization. Also CBO: community-based organization

NWP: Neighborhood Watch Program
OA: Operational Area
OES: California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
OEM: Office of Emergency Management (city or county)
SEMS: Standardized Emergency Management System
VC: Volunteer Center
VIPS: Volunteers in Police Service
VOAD: Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster; NVOAD: National

A.IV. Glossary:

CERT: Community Emergency Response Team(s). An long-established program that trains teams from specific neighborhoods in skills including, first aid, triage, small fire suppression, and light urban search and rescue. The goal is to have households and communities be able to assist and sustain themselves and help others if first responders cannot reach them immediately following a major disaster.

Citizen Corps Council[s]: A new organizational structure developed by FEMA to expand opportunities for community members to engage in volunteer service that supports emergency preparation, mitigation, and response and recovery. Local Councils are management tools that bring together first responders, other government agencies, nonprofit and faith-based organizations, and existing volunteer initiatives including Neighborhood Watch, CERT teams, Volunteers in Police Service, and Medical Reserve Corps. Councils are structured locally based on community needs and resources.

Citizen Corps Program: The term *Citizen Corps Program* is used to refer to the entire programmatic framework of Citizen Corps including Citizen Corps Councils at all levels and their component parts.

COAD: Community Organizations Active in Disaster. See VOAD. In California, "COAD" is a seldom-used alternate term for a local VOAD. There are no organizations in California known as COADs that are distinct from local VOADs. In some other states COADs are a different type of entity.

OA: Operational Areas were created by SEMS. An OA is a county and all the governmental jurisdictions within the county including incorporated cities, school districts, special districts, etc. The management of the OA has primary responsibility for planning for and responding to disasters that impact more than one of its component entities.

Unmet Needs Committee: A committee convened by a VOAD in the recovery phase of a disaster. It considers the cases of disaster victims whose needs have not been met through routine channels and seeks an operational entity among the Committee members that will work with the victim to solve the problem.

VOAD: Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster: At the national level, National VOAD, (NVOAD) is a coalition of national nonprofit and faith-based organizations that have defined disaster missions. The organizations have written commitments specifying the disaster-related services they will provide and how they will cooperate with each other. NVOAD encourages the development of state-level VOADs. In

California there are two: Northern California VOAD (NCVOAD) and Southern California VOAD (SCVOAD). Local VOADs may be formed under the state VOAD umbrella, generally at the county (Operational Area) level.